



1998 - 2018

BeCA's Happy 20th Anniversary Special Issue

*20 years supporting
the pilot profession*



20 years... and so many more to come!

20 years ago, the two 'Belgian pilots' associations of the time (ABPNL and BFCA) merged to become the Belgian Cockpit Association (initially abbreviated BCA). Since then, the world continued its (r)evolution. We tend to remember only negative events like climate change, the rise of terrorism in the Western World or the 2007-2008 financial crisis. But we forget that since 1998, the EURO was implemented, the internet and the social networks became an entire part of our daily life, there are pilotless aircraft in our skies and the life expectancy in Belgium increased by 4 years.

Aviation also continued its evolution, with the arrival of several new aircraft types (A380, A350, B787, C Series) and the upgrades of some of the already successful types (B737Max, A320 Neo, B747-800...). But for sure, the event we will all remember of those last 20 years is "9/11". Not only for the images of the 2 aircraft crashing into the WTC towers but for its consequences on the aviation world: stricter screening of passengers, increased security procedures at airports and on board, installation of reinforced cockpit doors...

Several air tragedies also made the headlines, like the crash of the Concorde near Paris that led to the phase-out of the type, the Air France 447 Rio-Paris flight that sank in the Atlantic, the disappearance of the Malaysian B777 over the Indian Ocean, the suicide of the Germanwings First Officer that crashed an A320 in the Alps. However aviation has never been safer than today, with only 10 fatal accidents in 2017 totalling 44 casualties. In comparison, during the same period, 615 people died in car accidents... in Belgium only!



During those 20 years, BeCA has of course been influenced by aviation history. The Sabena bankruptcy forced hundreds of pilots into retirement or expatriation. Its revenues coming exclusively from the membership fees, the association faced a critical financial situation. The number of members who could participate in the active life of the association also decreased. But the five successive BeCA presidents and the committees they presided not only guaranteed the survival of the association but made it a recognized aviation expert in Belgium and Europe: BeCA actively participated in the drafting and implementation of FDM protocols within Belgian airlines, saved the "droits acquis/verworven rechten" of the crew pension after its abolition in 2011, was a driving force in the drafting and implementation of the new EASA FTL rules, Just Culture and the Royal Decree on the protection of incident reporters and is now involved in the negotiations with Ryanair... just to mention a few.

Today, BeCA is not only a recognized stakeholder, but it has become an unavoidable partner. So many achievements for such a small team of volunteers (always looking for more helping hands), driven by the support of its 600+ members (you!) in Belgium and around the world.

We don't know what the future will look like. We will - without a doubt - face new (and ongoing) challenges, but thanks to our unity and our strong team, we will for sure be able to overcome them.

Happy Birthday, BeCA!

Christophe Verleye

Executive Vice-President





BeCA

Belgian Cockpit Association

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